

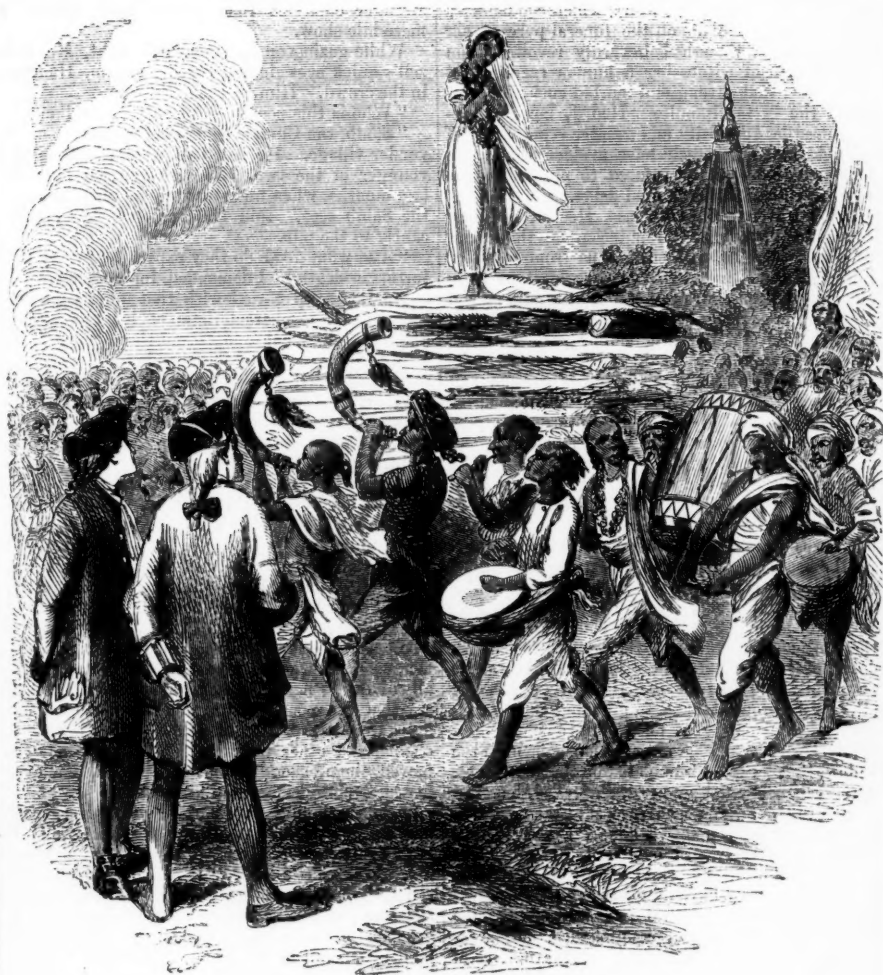
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HECTOR AND MR. DALZELL WITNESS A SUTTEE.

THE INDIAN NABOB:

OR, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

CHAPTER XXI.—HECTOR DARE WITNESSES A SUTTEE.

It was on the fourth or fifth day of our slow progress towards Cossimbazar, that I witnessed
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another scene which filled me with unutterable indignation and loathing. We had approached a large pagoda near the left bank of the river; and at a short distance further inland could be seen the thatched roofs and mud walls of a considerable

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village. We might have passed by these without particular notice, however, but for the sound of tom-toms, or drums, evidently drawing nearer and nearer, until, turning a sharp bend in the stream, we perceived a solemn procession of natives approaching a large pile of brushwood, dry bamboos, and other light materials for burning, built almost close to the water-side.

"Suttee!" whispered Mr. Dalzell, who had joined me on deck. "Very shocking, but very impressive, Hector."

I had heard of the rite of suttee—that terrible outrage on human nature, and on the best sympathies and feelings of the heart, which condemns a helpless woman to die on the funeral pyre of her husband; and though I inwardly revolted from the thought of witnessing a human sacrifice, let me confess that strong and morbid curiosity combated the better impulse. Had I, however, experienced less curiosity and greater repugnance, if possible, I could scarcely have avoided the sight; for our native boatmen refused to proceed on the voyage while a suttee invited delay.

"We will land, if you please, Hector," said my companion: "our good reputation on this river, as English Sahibs, will protect us from insult or injury; only let me warn you to exhibit as little surprise or displeasure as possible at anything you may witness, resting assured, as you very well may, that any interference on our part would be utterly unavailing on behalf of the poor victim."

We landed. By this time the procession had drawn very near, and the hideous music had for the time ceased. We advanced towards the pile, which we found guarded by natives of the lowest caste, who had already placed upon it the body of the dead husband; and we approached near enough to distinguish, on the exposed cadaverous countenance, the caste marks of Brahminism. The body itself was wrapped in a loose cotton robe or sheet. As the procession drew still nearer, we retired.

I shall not attempt to describe every particular of that painful scene, Archie: it is not needful, because you may elsewhere, if you please, peruse the testimony of other eye-witnesses to these dark deeds of heathenism; and, in truth, I was so powerfully agitated at the time, that memory afterwards brought back to my mind only a confused phantasma. Yet do I well remember how vainly I strove to hide my emotions, when, in the widow, so soon to be immolated on that detestable pyre, I beheld—not an aged, shrivelled, haggard wretch to whom, under other circumstances, death might have been thought almost a mercy, as a relief from poverty and contempt and other miseries of this life—but a child, a mere child, Archie. She could scarcely have numbered fourteen years; and of all the specimens I had seen of feminine beauty and loveliness of countenance, and symmetry of form, so common among the natives of India, when young, this poor victim was assuredly the nearest to perfection.

I uttered a cry of mental anguish, when Mr. Dalzell pointed out to me this beautiful girl as the widow of the dead Brahmin. He imposed silence on me by an impressive word and gesture.

"It is too horrible to be true," I whispered, trembling: "it is surely a dream, a pretence, a hideous ceremony, but harmless."

"You will see," replied my companion, laconically.

Meanwhile the procession had reached the pile; and then commenced a slow measured walk around it, I know not how many times repeated. I remember only that—whether absorbed in grief, or stupified by a narcotic preparation wrapped in betel-leaf, which she continued chewing—the poor unhappy child-widow seemed insensible to the horror of her situation, and the dreadful fate which awaited her. As far as I was capable of judging, she performed her part mechanically; her step, at least, was firm, and her countenance unmoved by stronger emotions than would have befitted a mere idle show.

While gazing on this mournful sight, Mr. Dalzell's quick eyes singled out his groom, Haldhar, in the crowd. Him he beckoned near.

"Who is this poor—this suttee, Haldhar?"

"Sahib, the Chunda Sing, was a great man in yonder village. He had two wives: this is the younger of the two. He had married her only two months, when unfortunately he died, and—the Sahib sees," said Haldhar, pointing significantly to the pile.

"And what good do they expect to get by this torturing death?" I demanded, impetuously.

Haldhar's lip curled with that quiet contemptuous smile so characteristic of his race. "The Sahib log does not understand these things," he said, turning away and joining his countrymen.

"Haldhar will not dispute with you: perhaps it is as well so," said Mr. Dalzell. "I will try to answer your question, however. And first, I should explain that the word *suttee*, though pre-eminently applied to this species of self-immolation, signifies also any act of purification."

"Yes, sir, yes," said I; "but see, they have stopped at the foot of the pile: the poor girl is about to ascend."

I was mistaken. The slow measured walk was renewed. I could neither see nor hear distinctly, for the crowd that intervened and the tumult of their voices; but I fancied I heard a low measured chant from those immediately surrounding the victim, who, as I was given to understand, was gradually divesting herself of her ornaments (I forgot to say that the poor creature was richly attired, and laden with a profusion of golden rings, bracelets, chains, and other jewellery). These, as she removed them, she distributed, I believe, among her immediate friends and kinswomen.

"No, the final act will not yet take place," said Mr. Dalzell, in reply to my exclamation: "and it will be better to divert your mind from these horrors for a little while. It may afford you some relief, too, to know that generally, in these cases, the sense of bodily as well as mental anguish is deadened in the unhappy woman by strong soporific drugs. But do not think," he added, "that I look on such scenes with indifference, though I speak with composure. A few years hence, and you, Hector, will probably have the fine edge taken off your sensibilities."

"And now to your question," he went on. "You ask what good these poor wretches hope to derive from their self-murder. If Haldhar had answered you, he would have said that they confidently expect by their voluntary sacrifice to

purify their dead husbands from all guilt contracted in life, and secure their future happiness. So you see, the best feelings of the compassionate heart of woman are enlisted in favour of this act of suttee."

Hector. And they believe this?

Mr. Dalzell. I presume they do. There are others, nearer home to us, of whom it may be said that they are given over to strong delusions, to believe a lie. But their belief does not stop here. They hope by this act to entitle themselves to long ages of conjugal happiness in another world, before recommencing the series of transmigrations to which they are destined in this.

Hector (doubtfully). But a faith so unsubstantial—

Mr. Dalzell. Requires some tangible inducement for its exercise, you would say. True: and these are supplied by the certainty of disgrace, contempt, and poverty for the remainder of their mortal life, should the miserable beings shrink from the dreadful ordeal. This poor young widow, for instance, were she to refuse the suttee, would ever afterwards be an object of detestation to every Hindoo. Her husband's relatives would persecute her, because her refusal would fix an indelible stain on him and them; her own would probably thrust her from their homes; her means of subsistence would be taken away; and she would never marry again: even a pariah would disdain such a degrading union.

Hector. These are powerful inducements and terrors; but the love of life is strong.

Mr. Dalzell (replying to my thoughts rather than to my words). True. Compulsion is used in many instances, I believe. It is remarkable, however, that the shastras nowhere enjoin this practice: they only recommend it, and that, as I understand, in rather qualified terms. But the deed of cruelty is drawing near to its fearful climax now. See!

The procession had in fact ceased; and, as I afterwards understood, various ceremonial acts had been undergone by the poor child-widow. I need not, however, refer to those which I did not witness, for every moment, from this time, increased the painful intensity of the scene.

First, then, a silence as of deep suspense seemed suddenly to have fallen on the congregated multitude, and not only hushed every tongue but almost suspended every breath, while all eyes were fixed upon the gloomy pile. It was but for a few moments, and then a shout, like nothing that had ever before assailed my ears, went up to heaven, as the young victim ascended to the resting-place of her husband.

Archie, I would have looked away, but volition seemed for the time suspended. I would have turned and fled, but my feet were as though rooted to the spot. In spite of his philosophy, and his familiar knowledge of these barbarities, I believe that Mr. Dalzell was almost as deeply affected as myself. He held my arm with an iron grasp; but his nerves were shaken, and he trembled violently.

"Supposing that poor creature were Zillah!" he murmured in my ear. Strange, that he could think even of Zillah at such a moment! But she was never out of his thoughts. And I—I

was thankful in my soul that Zillah was not subject to such a doom.

The "suttee" with a firm step trod the yielding platform; and as, for a moment or two, she stood out alone in bold relief, with only the bright clear sky for a background, another shout arose. It did not move her, however: I question, indeed, if she heard it. Like an automaton she was playing out her part in this death drama, and she did not even raise her eyes.

Another moment, and her executioners had joined her. They were two Brahmin priests; and she was passive in their hands. By their directions she laid quietly down by the side of her dead husband: then the living and the dead were bound together with cords; and while thus helpless as well as unresisting, wood and large bamboos were heaped upon the victim.

Another minute, and the Brahmins had disappeared; another, of awful suspense, and then a thin spiral wreath of light smoke ascended from the foot of the pyre; then a little blaze, gradually increasing and ascending higher and higher—creeping, gliding, stealing, leaping, onward, onward, on its murderous mission; then a thicker cloud of blacker smoke, overhanging the fearful couch; then a crackling of burning wood, and the roaring of fierce flames; then the discordant noise of tom-toms and harsh musical instruments, with shouts more loud, and prolonged, and demoniacal than those which had before exercised the lungs of the exulting crowd.

In the middle of all this, and above all, rose a shriek so piercing and rending, so fearful in its import, so full of anguish, that even now when I recall it to mind, my pulse quickens and my eye moistens. It needed no telling whence that shriek arose: the flames had gathered round the poor suttee, and their tortures had roused her slumbering faculties. I waited to hear, to witness no more. The spell which had bound me to the spot was broken by that fearful cry. I turned and fled, while yet it was ringing in my ears. I know not how I disentangled myself from the throng; nor have I a clear recollection of any subsequent event of that miserable day, until I found myself again in the cabin of our budgerow,* gently stemming the stream, as its broad sail filled out with the evening breeze, while, on all around and on either bank of the river, rested the spirit of beauty and repose.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALIVERDI KHAN.

You will credit me, Archie, that the scene I had just witnessed, and which I have so imperfectly described, destroyed for a time every relish for the beauties of nature. And other abominations, that almost daily presented themselves before us, during our river voyage, added to the overpowering sensations of disgust I experienced. Among these

* There are several kinds of boats on the Hooghly; but the most elegant and commodious are called budgerows. They vary in size. Some of them are sixty feet in length. They are generally furnished with from twelve to twenty cars, and have one mast in the centre. There is usually one large apartment with two sleeping-rooms; and in travelling on the Ganges, each budgerow is generally attended by one or two small boats, to carry kitchen utensils and luggage.—*Nalace's "Memoirs of India."*

was that of dead bodies floating down the stream, to become the loathsome food of the numerous alligators whose harsh and terrific bellowings were heard breaking the stillness of night. But enough of this: I have no desire that you, Archie, should "sup on horrors."

But the suttee. It was long before I could dismiss this from my thoughts. And now, when I remember that thousands of these holocausts are offered up every year to the impure and sanguinary deities of Hindoo mythology, even where British power is firmly established, and where, as I believe, they might be entirely abolished, I am constrained to ask, "Will not God visit us for these things?"*

Do not mistake me. The religion of Jesus will never be advanced by coercion or the power of the sword; but neither ought rulers, who call themselves Christians, to allow one of the plainest laws of the Creator, written on every man's conscience, to be broken with impunity, under the pretence of religion. Our government in India, Archie, is a good government, and its rule a blessed and benign rule compared with any that have ever preceded them; but, for all that, murder is a crime.

I shall detain you no longer with events of this voyage, of which I had grown sufficiently tired; and it was with feelings of relief that I sprung on to the landing-place at Cossimbazar, where we left our luggage to follow us on the heads of coolies, and took our way to the small English Factory. One of the first to greet us was young Warren Hastings; and while my patron was afterwards closeted with Mr. Watts, the resident and governor of the Factory, the young writer took me under his charge.

I have already told you, Archie, that, as I have no intention of writing a history of India, I shall refer to public personages and political events only so far as they are mixed up with my personal narrative. Probably, therefore, these memoirs may seem deficient in some particulars which have been carefully noted by the historians of that time; and, on the other hand, I may speak of occurrences which they have passed over in silence. Perhaps, also, I may put some facts in a rather different light from that in which they have been previously viewed; while it is not unlikely, Archie, that the lapse of time and the imperfection of memory may tend somewhat to obscure my narrative, and betray me into slight inaccuracies with regard to

times, places, and events. In these matters I must plead for your indulgence.

It was two or three days after our arrival at Cossimbazar that Mr. Dalzell received an intimation to present himself at the court of Aliverdi Khan, whose name I have already mentioned; and though I have just repudiated the office of historian, I must so far retract this disclaimer as to introduce that personage in his historical character.

Some twelve or fourteen years prior to the time of which I write, a successful revolution had placed the vice-royalty of the great provinces of Bengal, Orissa, and Bahar in the hands of a successful adventurer, of Afghan race, named Aliverdi. Nominally this ruler held sovereignty under the great Mogul of Delhi, but in reality he was an independent and absolute monarch; for the Mogul empire had fallen, never to rise again—its power was departed, and the prince who was seated precariously on its throne retained only the semblance of royalty.

Aliverdi was an aged man when he seized upon the government; but he was skilful, energetic, and, for an eastern usurper, just also. He successfully put down internal opposition and feuds; strenuously resisted the incursions of outer foes, especially the restless and warlike Mahrattas; encouraged and protected the peaceful arts among his own subjects; dealt out justice and equal laws to the Hindoo population; and so endeared himself to his people, that it was said of him, by way of honourable distinction, that he was perhaps the only eastern monarch whom no one ever wished to assassinate.

The capital of Aliverdi's empire or regency was Moorshedabad, a large city closely adjoining to the port of Cossimbazar, and there he also resided and held his court; and this proximity to the English Factory established there, so far from being inimical to the interests of the Company, enabled them to maintain friendly relations with one who might have been a powerful enemy. Under his auspices the British factors and their servants, both at Calcutta and Cossimbazar, dwelt in prosperity and safety. He promoted their wishes; viewed without jealousy their commercial greatness; protected their native agents and brokers in their wide-spread dealings throughout the country in which they were engaged; and, when the Factory of Fort William and the infant town of Calcutta were threatened with an invasion of their common foe, the Mahrattas, Aliverdi permitted them to strengthen their defences, and to commence the work, which, however, was never completed—namely, the "Mahratta ditch"—a kind of deep moat or canal, intended to inclose the Company's territory around the fort and town.*

It is true that, in some measure, the British Company had been expected to purchase their privileges, and pay for the protection of the khan by presents of hard cash; and there had been times when patience had been tried by the frequency and largeness of these exactions; and occasional resistance had temporarily imperilled the good under-

* Many good men of that day, besides Hector Dare, thought so too; but it was not till many years after the supposed date of these memoirs that the British government in India ventured to interfere with these horrid sacrifices. To Lord Bentinck, when he was Governor-General of India, belongs the honour of having abolished the rite of suttee. This was in 1829, until which time the British government had permitted it, provided the act were voluntary, and that notice of such resolution had been previously given to a magistrate, who was required to see that the suttee was public and that all the requisitions of the law were fulfilled. It is calculated that from the year 1756, to the above date, upwards of 70,000 widows were thus cruelly sacrificed.

Opinions, it seems, were divided respecting the abolition of these self-sacrifices: some believing that suttees would then take place in secret, and be even more common than before; and that opportunities, moreover, would be afforded for many murders. But these fears appear to have been groundless. The people are said to have heartily rejoiced at the abolition. —See "British Cyclopædia," Art. SUTTEE.

* In point of fact, the Mahratta ditch was the voluntary work of the natives, who, through fear of the Mahrattas, had taken refuge in the Company's domains.

standing between the khan and his English neighbours and guests; but—as is the case in private life, where two parties with an ordinary amount of human wisdom are bound together by common ties of interest—these slight disputes had been easily adjusted, and friendship permanently re-established.

Great, however, as he had become, and firmly seated as he appeared to be on his earthly throne, there were drawbacks to Aliverdi's felicity. The first of these was that he was old. His was a vigorous old age, it is true, for he had not weakened himself by the ordinary vices of eastern despots; but he was hastening on towards fourscore years, and no power could arrest the progress of time and natural decay.

Another sorrow was that he was childless. Among easterns, this is reckoned no light calamity; and, in default of natural heirs, an Asiatic, who has a name or power or property to bequeath, will adopt a relative, a stranger, or even sometimes a slave, to fill up the vacant place in his affections, investing him at the same time with the rights and prerogatives of sonship and heirship.

In pursuance of this universal custom, Aliverdi had adopted a youth, the son of one of his own nephews. Unhappily, Mirza Mahmoud—the young prince's name—was of a character the very opposite, in every essential particular, to that of his aged patron. He was crafty, treacherous, cruel, avaricious, and suspicious. Almost one of the first acts in which he was engaged, after his accession to the honour and dignity of adoption, was the assassination of two near relatives, from motives of jealousy, followed by a mean and dastardly attempt to fix suspicion of the secret crime upon the innocent; and every subsequent act of his bad life betokened and betrayed the depth of his depravity.

I must break off here; for, as this Mirza Mahmoud will hereafter figure to some extent in some parts of my narrative, it is fitting that his character should receive more attention than can be given in the small space which remains of this present sheet.

EARTHQUAKES.

AGAIN has the oft-shook south of Italy been shaken by the earthquake; and not for more than the full age of man, or since the year 1783, has the dread phenomenon been experienced in that region with such tremendous energy and fatal effect. Mountains have quivered from base to summit; valleys and plains have trembled; rocks have been rent asunder, or twisted and contorted into diversified shapes, as if grasped by the hand of Omnipotence; and the strongest habitations of man have been cast down, as easily as the "fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ruin drove her ploughshare through vineyards, orchards, homesteads, villages, and towns, occupying an area of more than a hundred square miles, hurrying a frightful number of the population to their solemn account; entombing others alive, many of whom perished by a lingering death; maiming,

impoverishing, and rendering homeless and shelterless a host of survivors. It was on the night of Wednesday, December the 16th, at ten minutes past ten o'clock, when thousands of the inhabitants of Naples, and most of those in the provinces specially visited, had resigned themselves to slumber, that the first shock was felt. So violent was it, that the sleeping started from their beds, roused by a sense of strong but indefinite alarm, while the sleepless beheld with awe every object around them mysteriously affected. Tables moved backward and forward as though dragged by a powerful hand; lamps, suspended from the ceiling, swung to and fro; pictures jostled each other, and knocked against the walls; the bells rang loud and long, as if handled by one in haste for admission; the timbers of rooms creaked like those of a ship labouring in a heavy sea; the very walls moved perceptibly; and, raising the fearful cry, "The Earthquake! the Earthquake!" the panic-struck inmates rushed from their dwellings into the streets. Two minutes had scarcely elapsed when the *replica* was experienced, or repetition of the shock, waited for with an agony of apprehension, as usually more violent than its precursor. It came with the strength of a giant, when all the preceding terrible symptoms of terrestrial instability were renewed with greater intensity. Persons, in nearly a fainting condition, were seen leaning against walls for support, and rocked backwards and forwards as in a cradle, without the power of resistance. Two pendulum clocks at the observatory stopped; and the thought was present to distracted crowds, that probably in a few moments, to them, the awful mandate would be put in force, "There shall be time no longer." The capital, distant from the focus of disturbance, and protected by the safety-valve of Vesuvius, suffered no actual disaster. But the provinces of Principato, Citeriore, and Basilicata were dreadfully ravaged; for 30,000 persons are supposed to have lost their lives, while full 250,000, reduced to homelessness, were found by benevolent visitors oppressed with cold, hunger, and sickness, sitting stupefied and despairing amid the ruins of their habitations.

It is not our purpose to notice this visitation further, except incidentally, but to glance at the general features and some peculiar phases of earthquakes—the most fearful and destructive of all the phenomena of nature.

That movement of the solid surface of the globe, which we appropriately denominate an earthquake, is the effect of forces far beyond the reach of observation, acting upward from unknown subterranean depths, with varying intensity and under somewhat different conditions. Generally there is only a tremor of the ground, so feeble as to be scarcely obvious to the senses; and multitudes engaged in business or pleasure are unconscious that an enemy has been at their door. No injury is done, and no superficial displacement, even so much as the removal of a pebble, is observed. The attentive alone perceive the vibration, which passes away in the instant of its arrival, and leaves no more trace of its activity than does the slight shiver so often experienced by the human frame. Hence, in some countries, where moderate shocks are very common, habit has so reconciled the

inhabitants to them, that they attract no more notice than a hailstorm with ourselves. But in several of these regions, twice or thrice in a century the subterraneous force acts with greater energy, alters the features of the landscape, changes the relative level of sea and shore, and indiscriminately prostrates the gorgeous palaces and cloud-capt towers of the high and mighty, with the huts and hovels of the lowly and obscure. It is therefore true, that while destructive earthquakes are mercifully rare events, the phenomenon itself is of very frequent occurrence, if not constant, reckoning the slight with the severe expressions of it. Thus, at Palermo in Sicily, fifty-seven smart shocks were felt in the space of forty years; at Copapo, in the north of Chili, scarcely a day passes without one or more; and at Comrie, in our own Scotland, so extraordinarily frequent are exhibitions of subterranean action, that in little more than two years, from October, 1839, to December, 1841, not less than two hundred and forty-seven shocks were noted and described. Hence there is sufficient ground for the opinion of Humboldt, that if we were daily informed respecting the state of the whole surface of our planet, it would be found that this surface is nearly always shaking at some point or other of its circumference, and is subject to an uninterrupted reaction between the interior and exterior.

While earthquakes are far more common in some countries than others, and have been recorded in antique, sacred, and classical lands from the dawn of authentic history, it would be impossible to refer to any portion of the globe, aqueous or solid, as certainly exempt from such demonstrative evidences of instability. They occur in regions widely apart from each other, of wholly different climate, physiognomy, and geological constitution. Insular and continental tracts, rugged and level districts, dry and swampy plains, have been ravaged, with regions composed of primitive rocks, stratified masses, and alluvial deposits. The mighty internal agency, however it may be caused, has grappled with sites of the most discordant physical character in the struggle for disengagement, as the high table-lands of the Andes, the low prairies of the Mississippi, the deep valleys of the Alps, the bleak steppes of Siberia, the hot sands of Syria, the moist flats of Holland, and the vine-clad hills of the Rhine; while at nearly the antipodes of each other, the islands of Great Britain and New Zealand are included within the empire of the all-conquering power—though happily we have only hitherto experienced either moderate indigenous shocks, or such as, being propagated from a distant centre of convulsion, reach us with subdued or expiring energy. As a general rule, it may be stated that concussions are most frequent in the immediate neighbourhood of active volcanoes; but they are not often disastrous, while those of the tremendous and destructive kind either occur at some distance from these smoking and flaring funnels, rarely less than a hundred miles, or in countries which are altogether non-volcanic. It is also true that shocks are more numerous and violent in maritime positions than in the far interior of continents. Irkutsk, with its vicinity, in Siberia, though more than a thousand miles from any part of the ocean, can hardly be said to

form an exception, as it directly borders on the great lake Baikal, the Holy Sea of the Russians, whose mysterious movements when not a breath of wind is astir to agitate the surface, are probably caused by deep-seated subterranean commotion.

In all earthquakes, especially of the intenser kind, which have had their phenomena completely examined, there is an area indicated, often very circumscribed—perchance the site of a town, a part of the open country, or a point at sea—where the concussion is the most violent, and is felt earlier than at distant places. This is, therefore, the focus of disturbance. From such a spot the shock is propagated mechanically through the external covering of the globe, as sounds travel through the air, to a distance which depends upon the strength of the impulse, and the capacity of strata to yield to or resist vibration. The propagation is conducted in one of two different ways, which apparently depend upon circumstances of physical geography and geology. In some instances the shock travels in a determinate direction towards certain points of the compass opposite to each other—north and south, east and west, as the case may be—affecting a comparatively narrow belt of intermediate country. Here we have a *linear* earthquake, common in mountainous districts. The recent one in the Neapolitan kingdom seems to have been of this description. In other cases, the shock extends somewhat equally on all sides from the focus, like rays from the sun, or the cracks in a square of glass when sharply struck by a stone; and its progress is comparable to that of the ring-like wave formed by a pebble on the surface of still water, which becomes weaker as the expansion increases. This is, hence, called a *central* earthquake. A striking example was furnished by the great convulsion at Lisbon, in the last century, which extended its waves of vibration to the Alps, the shores of Africa, the West Indies, and the north of Europe. When there is a series of shocks, protracted through several weeks or months, the centre often changes its place; and two or more *foci* have been noticed in a single outbreak. It is a curious and well-authenticated fact, that, after being propagated a certain distance, a shock will be intermitted through a considerable extent of country, and be again manifest in a region lying beyond it. It is as though a barrier to progress had been met with, and overcome by an undermining process. On such occasions the earthquake is said to “form a bridge,” in the language of the South American Creoles, the bridge being the intervening unaffected district, beneath which the shock is supposed to dip and pass at too great a depth to be sensible at the surface.

The nature of the motion communicated to the surface by earthquake-shocks is of several distinct kinds, distinguished by the terms tremulous, horizontal, vertical, undulating, and rotatory. But in some instances the movement is so complex as to defy description.

The *tremulous* motion of the ground—*tremblement de terre* of the French, and *tremblores* of the South Americans—is more or less observed in all earthquakes, and is the least dangerous movement. The sensation produced is similar to that felt on board a steamer, when, in letting off the steam, the vibrating plates of the boiler cause the

deck to tremble. In severe expressions, it has been compared to that felt by a person riding, when the horse shakes himself. Among other commonly observed effects, the flickering of the flames of candles, the clatter of furniture, the rattle of slates on roofs, the quivering of trees and hedges, and the emission of sounds from the strings of musical instruments are mentioned.

The *horizontal* motion seems to be chiefly a vigorous form of the tremulous; for the surface strongly oscillates to and fro, is moved forward and backward, often causing the permanent displacement of objects. At London, in 1750, the general impression was that the whole city was violently pushed to the south-east, and then brought back again. At Inverness, in 1816, buildings were suddenly pushed horizontally to the south-east, and left, as it were, behind them stones and other objects not firmly attached, to which, therefore, the movement could not be instantaneously communicated.

The *vertical*, or upheaving shock, is far more to be dreaded than either of the former, though it often occasions only an uplifting of the surface, which subsides again without fracture, or any injury to the objects upon it. This kind of shock generally occurs when the tremulous motion is at its height. Very frequently it is accompanied with a loud explosive noise, and makes an impression upon the inmates of dwellings as if a blow had been struck at the foundations with some enormous hammer. A concussion of this nature shivered to pieces the ice on a lake near Lawers House, Perthshire, in 1789; and during the shock at London, in 1750, which was most violent along the course of the Thames, a mariner felt as if his boat had received a blow at the bottom. Fish were also observed to leap two or three feet out of the water, though probably more from fright than the force of the earthquake itself. But sometimes the upheaving movement signalizes its activity with fearful violence, and makes sad havoc of life and property. The ground is burst open; houses are hurled from their sites; and trees, stones, and human beings are blown high in the air, as if some immense magazine of combustibles, in the bowels of the earth, had suddenly exploded. A visitor to the scene of the late catastrophe observed a tree which had been uprooted, and, as it were, replanted, with the roots uppermost. Several dwellings also were seen similarly turned upside down. But the most terrific example on record occurred at Riobamba, on the high table-land of Quito, on the 7th of February, 1797, when the whole town was blown up, and from 30,000 to 40,000 persons perished, including the inhabitants of some adjoining villages. The corpses of many of them were afterwards found on the top of a hill, separated from the town by a river, and several hundred feet higher than its site. They had been thrown to its summit by the violence of the disturbing force operating in a vertical direction. So completely was the entire neighbourhood deserted, that several law-suits were brought in the courts of the country respecting the possession of pieces of ground, which had been removed *en masse* to new positions. Taking all the circumstances into account, this may be regarded as one of the most fearful physical incidents that has marked the history of

the globe since the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The noticeable circumstance is, that it came upon the unfortunate population in perfect silence, "as a thief in the night." Not only was there no preliminary noise, "like the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings," but the tremendous outburst took place while the explosive element itself maintained an awful stillness. The only sounds heard were occasioned by the rending rocks, the cries of the dying or despairing people, and the crash of their houses as they were hurled to ruin.

In many cases, probably in most, an *undulating* motion of the surface is produced, as the effect of combined horizontal and vertical movements, by which objects are moved upwards and forwards, and then brought back to their original position. The appearance of the ground corresponds to that of the sea when agitated by a moderate breeze. Near London, in 1750, the dry and solid soil is described as having waved like the surface of a river, and the tall trees bent their tops. At Liverpool, on another occasion, a person compared the motion he felt to that of being in a vessel, falling from the top of one wave, and rising again upon the next. In Shropshire, during a strong shock, in 1773, which caused extensive fissures, a field of oats was observed to heave up and roll about like waves of water, and the trees moved as if blown by the wind, though the air was at the time perfectly calm and serene. Whirling or *rotary* movements of the surface are very rare, and are only observed in connection with the most desolating earthquakes. They appear to be caused by two or more horizontal shocks crossing each other at right angles. Ah! how do such terrible phenomena teach the lesson of dependence on that mighty Being, who can in one moment roll desolation over a guilty community!

GLIMPSES OF ROYAL LIFE AT LUCKNOW.

THERE are few subjects within the wide range of human knowledge, respecting which there has always existed a greedier curiosity than that of the private life and habits of oriental sovereigns. The splendour and vast extent of their abodes, the gorgeous magnificence of their surroundings, the mysterious seclusion of their persons, and the startling and sometimes terrible manifestations of their absolute power, have so impressed the imagination of most persons as to invest them with an interest at once exaggerated and romantic. Our rapidly growing intercourse with eastern nations during the past half century, and the more accurate information which has in consequence been disseminated among the educated classes, has done something towards sobering our glowing admiration for all that is oriental; yet, it must be admitted that in spite of this partial disenchantment, these subjects still possess an irresistible fascination for most minds. In a former sketch we endeavoured to minister to this intellectual craving, by presenting a few pictures of Delhi since it has ceased to be the seat of empire—venturing within the once well-guarded precincts of the imperial palace, and even intruding upon the privacy of the

forlorn and disrowned Mogul ruler. In the present paper it is our intention to transfer our photographic apparatus to Lucknow—a city which rose to royal honours, as the capital of the kingdom of Oude, after Delhi had been shorn of the imperial dominion which she had exercised for ages, and which, during the recent events of the mutiny, has outrivalled even Delhi herself in engrossing interest and tragical association.

During the reign of the Mogul dynasty, Oude formed one province of the powerful empire over which it held sway; but in the conquest of Delhi by the British, and the disintegration of the Mogul dominions, this district was erected into a kingdom, under a kind of suzerainty on the part of the East India Company, of which Lucknow became the capital. Much of the prestige of the old metropolis of Mahomedanism was transferred to this great city; and the royal family of Oude inherited no insignificant measure of the magnificence, luxury, and vice for which the Moguls had traditionally been so famous. Although the kingdom was thus the creation of a comparatively recent period—four sovereigns only having sat upon its musnid, including the ex-royal conspirator now in British custody—yet, to any one desiring a picture of the characteristic peculiarities of oriental kingship, we should point to royal life at Lucknow.

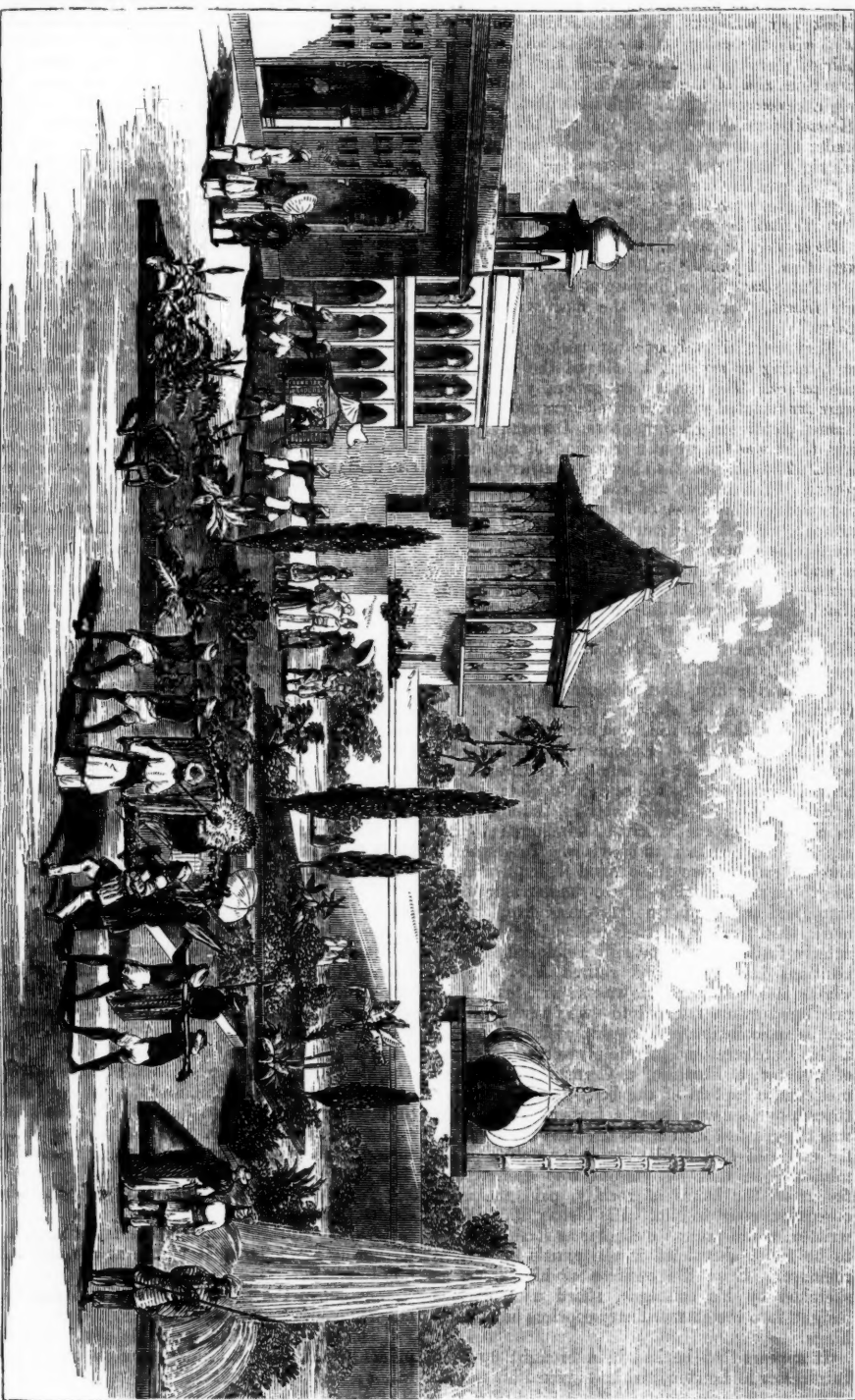
But how, the inquisitive reader may ask, am I to pass the dreaded barriers which are so jealously drawn around the sacred person of the Eastern despot, and gain access to the recesses of his populous palace? How am I to procure the coveted privilege of watching all the movements of Majesty within the secluded sanctuary of its dwelling-place? Well, fortunately, we are able to suggest a mode of obviating this difficulty, and putting the reader in the way of gratifying all legitimate curiosity. It so happens that, somewhat less than two years ago, a work appeared, purporting to give authentic representations of the details of daily life at the court of Lucknow. The volume, which excited a considerable degree of attention, from the graphic nature of its disclosures, was at first sent forth anonymously; but in subsequent editions the author, or more properly the compiler and editor of the materials intrusted to him, has attached his name, and afforded corroborative evidence of the truthfulness of the strange statements with which the narrative abounds. The history of the book is a singular one. The facts and incidents which form the staple of the work were related to Mr. W. Knighton by an English gentleman, formerly a prominent member of the household of his late Majesty Nussir-a-Deen, king of Oude, and which, having been committed to paper, were published with his sanction. So much for the authenticity of the publication. The glimpses which it gives us of royal extravagance, court corruption, and social disorganization at Lucknow, previous to the annexation of the kingdom, are especially valuable at the present time, and ought to be extensively studied, to assist us in forming a correct judgment on the propriety or impropriety of that much debated act of the British government. Without in any degree committing ourselves to any opinion on this question, however, we think that such of our readers as have not already perused the volume

referred to, will be both pleased and instructed by some passages from the private life of an Eastern king.

By no means one of the least interesting and characteristic incidents recorded, is that of the introduction of the narrator to the king of Oude, and the circumstances which led to his acceptance of an appointment in his Majesty's household. Having occasion to visit Lucknow on business, he was anxious to witness some of the famous sights with which that capital abounded, conspicuous among which were the royal menagerie and the palace. While there, through the intervention of a friend at court, he solicited and obtained an audience of his Majesty, more through curiosity to see what an Indian sovereign was like, than from any more definite purpose. As often happens, however, in such cases, this apparently trifling occurrence was destined to give quite a new shape to his career. The interview took place at one of his Majesty's ordinary durbars or levées. The king, instead of being seated cross-legged on a cushion, in true oriental fashion, was mounted on a golden arm-chair. He was attired, however, in rich native robes, and wore a crown ornamented with a feather from the bird of paradise on his head; yet, on the whole, there was a decided European air about him and the apartment in which he received his visitors.

This audience, which was quite of a formal, ceremonious character, was only introductory to the more familiar interview which issued in such important results. It had been confidentially intimated to our mercantile traveller that there was a certain office in the royal household which was then vacant, and to which, if he found favour in the sight of the king, he might get the appointment. As an indispensable preliminary, it was necessary to secure the sanction of the British Resident, which, after some correspondence, was obtained, on the condition that he abstained from mixing himself up in the intrigues of rival ministers and courtiers. Having made this arrangement, and provided a suitable present—for no one must approach an eastern monarch empty-handed—the course was prepared for the interview. It was to take place in a garden of the palace, at an hour when his Majesty was enjoying a season of relaxation with some of the favourite European members of his household. What occurred on this occasion cannot be better described than by adopting, in the main, the narrator's own words.

I remained, he says, at the end of a walk, to await the king's approach. My present (five gold mohurs, equal to £8 sterling) rested on the open palm of my hand, a fine muslin handkerchief being thrown over the hand, between it and the pieces of gold. The palm of the left hand supported the right, on which the present was placed. In that attitude I awaited his Majesty. It was my first lesson in court etiquette; and I could not help thinking, as I stood thus, that I looked exceedingly foolish. My hat was resting on a seat hard by. I was uncovered, of course, and the day was sunny and hot; so that, before the king came round, I was in an extempore bath. At length the party approached. His Majesty was dressed as an English gentleman, in a plain black suit, a London hat on his head. His face, of a very light



GARDENS OF THE ROYAL PALACE AT ICCEROW.

sepia tint, was pleasing in its expression. His black hair, whiskers, and moustachios contrasted well with the colour of the cheeks, and set off a pair of piercing black eyes, small and keen. He was thin, and of the middle height. As he drew nigh, he conversed in English with his attendants. He smiled as he approached me, put his left hand under mine, touched the gold with the fingers of his right hand, and then observed:—

"So, you have decided on entering my service?"

"I have, your Majesty," was my reply.

"We shall be good friends: I love the English."

So saying, he passed, resuming his former conversation. I joined the attendants.

"Put your gold mohurs up at once," whispered my friend, "or some of the natives will take them."

They were slipped into my pocket forthwith; and, taking up my hat, I followed the party into the palace. The rooms were generally large, and were ornamented with rich chandeliers and gaudily-framed pictures in great numbers. Generally speaking, there was too great a crowding of objects in each. The effect was, to bewilder rather than to please. Rich lustres and chandeliers, cabinets of rare woods, of ivory or of lacquered ware, suits of armour, jewelled arms, and richly-decorated shields, were to be seen on all sides: there was too great a profusion of such things. The private dining-room—that used by the king when he had his intimate friends around him—was the only neat room in the palace. It was not overcrowded; and it differed from an English dining-room in no essential particular.

One of the first discoveries made by our new functionary, on his obtaining the *entrée* of the palace, was, that the king had surrounded himself with a little circle of European favourites. He was very much under the influence of these satellites, some of whom, we regret to state, acting under the sway of sordid motives, indulged him in all kinds of eccentricities, ministered to his caprices, and pandered to his vices. To so scandalous an extent were these royal delinquencies at length carried, that it is due to the narrator of the story, and another of the "favoured five," to remark, that, finding all their remonstrances to be utterly futile, they eventually relinquished their positions in disgust, and retired from a court whose moral atmosphere was so vitiated. The privileged group referred to—who were admitted to the most intimate fellowship with the king in all his state cares and private pleasures—consisted of a tutor, a librarian, a German painter and musician, a captain of the body-guard, and last, though by no means least, a barber. The latter was the greatest man of the five, and his influence far exceeded that of the nawab, or native prime minister; so that all persons who desired any favour at the hands of royalty, paid the most obsequious court to him. His history, if faithfully written, would present a chapter as strange as any to be found chronicled in the annals of eastern romance. Even the outlines of his career, as sketched by his colleague, afford us a curious insight into the extraordinary caprices of oriental kings.

It appears that he had been brought up as a hairdresser in London, and had worked his way to

Calcutta as a cabin-boy, intending there to resume his proper business. He did so with great success, pushing and puffing himself into notoriety. At length he took to going up and down the river with European merchandise for sale; he became, in fact, what is called a river trader. Arrived at Lucknow, he found a Resident who was anxious to have the ringlets of his wig restored to their pristine crispness and brilliancy; and the river trader was not above turning his hand to his old profession. So marvellous was the transformation made in the Resident's appearance, that the great sahib introduced the wonder-working barber to the king. His Majesty happened to have particularly lank, straight hair. Here, then, was a fine sphere for the decorative talents of the barber. He fully appreciated the opportunity for distinguishing himself, and again wrought artistic wonders. The delighted king showered honours and wealth upon the fortunate coiffeur. A title of nobility even was conferred upon him. Men bowed to him as "The Illustrious Chief." Of unscrupulous character, he accepted bribes in exchange for his good offices with the sovereign. Besides these inlets of opulence, he was appointed a kind of steward of the royal household, every European article required at court passing through his hands. The feeling of the infatuated monarch seemed to be identical with that which, ages ago, prompted the inquiry, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" This reckless determination to aggrandize the favourite was strikingly illustrated in the following incident.

It was the custom for the barber to present the bill of the things he had supplied to the palace and the menagerie at monthly intervals. This generally took place just after tiffin, or lunch. On one occasion the favourite entered the presence of his Majesty with a portentous roll in his hand.

"Ha, khan!" exclaimed the king, observing him; "the monthly bill, is it?"

"It is, your Majesty," was the smiling reply.

"Come, out with it: let us see the extent. Unroll it, khan."

The king was in a playful humour; and the politic barber was always in the same mood as the king. Holding the end of the roll in his hand, he threw the rest along the floor, and allowed it to unroll itself as it retreated. It reached to the other side of the long apartment: a formidable array of items and figures, closely written, too. The king, expressing a wish to have it measured, a measure was brought in, and the bill was found to be four yards and a half long. The total amounted to upwards of 90,000 rupees, or above £9000. Glancing at the total, the king remarked: "Larger than usual, khan."

"Yes, your Majesty; the plate, and the new elephants, etc., etc."

"Ah, it's all right, I know," said the king, interrupting him; "take it to the nawab and tell him to pay it."

Whereupon the signature was affixed and the bill was paid.

"The khan is robbing your Majesty," said an influential courtier to the king, some months afterwards: "his bills are exorbitant."

"If I choose to make the khan a rich man, is that anything to you—to any of you? I know his bills are exorbitant: let them be so: it is my pleasure. He *shall* be rich." Such was the indignant answer.

Thus no limits could be set to the extravagant favours showered upon the fascinating barber. The most implicit confidence was reposed in him. By degrees he had become a regular guest at the royal table, and a companion of the royal revels. His Majesty would not taste of a bottle of wine opened by any other hands than those of the barber; and to escape poisoning—that haunting dread of despots—every bottle of wine was sealed in the barber's house before being brought to the king's table. The ascendancy which this man had acquired over Nussir was soon generally known throughout Bengal, and he became the subject of squibs, pasquinades, and satirical verses without number. Some of the newspapers, too, were so constant in their attacks on him, that the barber ultimately employed a clerk in the Resident's office to answer them, for which service he was paid £10 a month. Thus, if the barber had not his own poet, like some of the London tailors, he had, at all events, like our leading journals, his "own correspondent."

While on the subject of the king's costly caprice, we may exemplify the charge by adducing one other instance. Passing over the enormous sums lavished from time to time upon fresh favourites in the zenana, we will mention the case of a miserable beggar, named Peeroo, who, with no very meritorious qualities to recommend him, was enriched and exalted by an unaccountable impulse of royal waywardness. This ignoble favourite attracted the king's notice on one delightful December day, while the royal equipage was passing along a public road running through the park. The Irish coachman, a comical character, was ordered to walk the four cream-coloured Arab horses, that his Majesty might enjoy the fresh and balmy air. While the *cortège* was thus leisurely proceeding, a half-naked native of tall stature suddenly emerged from the side of the road, and began dancing and chanting a wild melody. The king turned to regard him. Some of the attendant troopers would have driven the fellow away; but, in the capricious whim of the moment, his Majesty called out to them to desist, and at the same time the carriage was ordered to stop. Peeroo, seeing the whole cavalcade pulled up, was delighted with the attention which he had attracted to himself, and went on, in a wild enthusiastic manner, with his uncouth dancing and nasal singing. Some happily-turned compliment or ingenious piece of flattery in the song gratified the king's vanity, and he ordered a native attendant to give the audacious mendicant five gold mohurs (£8).

"I will hear you again at the palace to-morrow," said Nussir, as he drove on; whilst Peeroo, whose fortune was made by this ridiculous *coup*, assured him in reply, that the favour of "the Asylum of the Universe" was to him what the heat of the sun is to the palm-tree.

Peeroo was really something of a poet—one of Nature's rough diamonds, who had never been purged of the dark incrustations by which he was

surrounded: but, unlike the majority of his rhythmical brethren, he was troubled with little bashfulness. He accordingly made his appearance on the following day at the palace, and offered to chant a new melody; but the sovereign would hear nothing but the same one that had first charmed him. Day after day was the visit repeated, and the same song recited; the king finding, apparently, ever new delight in it. Largesses were showered upon the head of the fortunate minstrel, and he began to be reckoned somebody in Lucknow. Before a month had passed away, the nawab, imitating his master, gave presents to Peeroo; the commander-in-chief did the same; the head of the police followed the fashion; so that money flowed fast into the open palm of Peeroo. At length, apartments were prepared for him in the palace. His formerly nearly naked body was clothed in purple and fine linen. The three leading natives of the court spoke to him as to an equal. At first daily, then weekly, then monthly, and, in fine, rarely did Peeroo sing his songs before the Fountain of Honour; yet he still continued a favourite, and, ere two years had elapsed, he was a titled noble of note in the court of Lucknow.

So much for the ennobled barber and the beggar. Leaving them, we have a few words to speak concerning the English tutor. The appointment of such a professional in Nussir's household, at the handsome salary of £1500 a year, would seem to point to educational aspirations and literary tastes on the part of the king. No inference, however, could be more fallacious. The gentleman was merely a sort of luxurious appendage to the court—a piece of intellectual furniture—designed more for show than for use. The king certainly, in his better moments, valorously resolved over and over again to give an hour a day to study, for he was anxious to speak English fluently. As it was, he was often obliged to eke out his sentences with a Hindostani word. But he was too much enervated by pleasures to persevere with any energy. Such a scene as this was of constant occurrence.

His Majesty and the tutor would sit down at table, with books before them.

"Now, master," Nussir would say, "we will begin in earnest."

The tutor accordingly would read a passage from the "Spectator," or from some popular modern book, and the king would repeat it after him. The tutor would then read again, and await the royal response. Instead of that, however, his Majesty, stretching himself, would exclaim, "Bopery bop (equivalent to 'Oh, dear me,') but this is dry work! let us have a glass of wine, master." The glass of wine led to conversation, the books were pushed aside, and so the lesson ended. Such lessons seldom occupied more than ten minutes.

The services of the tutor were more frequently in requisition to give interest to the amusements by which the king wasted his time and squandered the wealth wrung from the people. In the following picture he figures as the antagonist of his Majesty in a game of draughts; it being an understood thing among the courtiers that the king was never to be beaten in play—a circumstance, we believe, by no means peculiar to an Indian court. The sovereign having one day after dinner proposed to a surgeon in the Company's service,

whom he exceedingly disliked, to play a game of draughts for a hundred gold mohurs, the surgeon very wisely declined the equivocal honour, pleading his poverty as an excuse. The baffled king then, turning to his tutor, said, "Master, will you play me at draughts for a hundred gold mohurs?"

"Your Majesty honours me—I shall be delighted," replied the tutor, better acquainted with the whims and eccentricities of the monarch.

The board was brought, the men were placed, and the game commenced. The king played badly, but the tutor worse. It was a difficult feat, but he contrived to let his Majesty win.

"You owe me a hundred gold mohurs," said the triumphant monarch.

"I do, your Majesty; I shall bring them this evening."

"Don't forget," was the reply.

That evening, when the king and the favoured five assembled for dinner, the first remark his Majesty made was addressed to the tutor: "Well, master, have you brought the gold mohurs?"

"I have, your Majesty: they are below in the palanquin. Shall I bring them here?"

"Nonsense, master: keep them; send them home again. Do you think I want your money? Jones (the surgeon) thought I wanted his."

Such were some of the vagaries of Nussir-adeen. In another chapter we shall exhibit other examples of royal arbitrariness, which were far more deplorable in their consequences.

FALSE PROVERBS.

PART II.

"A PENNY saved is a penny gained." "Well," you say, "that is a good old saying; what is there in that to find fault with? If you save a penny, is it not so much gain?" Yes, sometimes. If an expense be spared which was needless, that penny is gained. If some indulgence be given up, which was not only needless, but injurious; if, for instance, a young man puts down his cigar, and buys with the money thus saved some good books; or if a working man forsakes for ever the public-house, and appropriates the money thus saved to the support or education of his family, or places it in the savings-bank against "a rainy day;" in either of these cases the penny is doubly, trebly gained. But there are cases in which the "penny saved" is not "a penny gained." When the saving of that penny costs twopence, it is no gain then. A man once took a broken sixpence to a silversmith, and asked if it could be repaired. "Oh! yes," was the reply. It was left. A few days after the man called to inquire after his sixpence. It was ready. "How much is it?" "Sevenpence!"

A good many "sevenpences" have been thrown away in the saving of "sixpence." When there is expended on the saving as much time and thought as, rightly directed, might have earned a good many pence; when the soul gets such a habit of scrimping and screwing, that it can do nothing generous, and is contracted into a nutshell; when the husbandman stints the manure with which his ground should be enriched, or the seed he casts

into it; when a covetous parent puts his money by and says, "My children shall have it when I have done with it," instead of giving them a good education; when a deaf ear is turned to the claims of benevolence, and the penny is saved which it was the first and the right impulse to give, the penny may be "saved," but it is anything but "gained." "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." Prov. xiii. 7. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than he meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Prov. xi. 24.

"We must do at Rome as Rome does;" or, in another form, "Do as other people do." Right enough to do as other people do, if the thing be good; right enough if it be indifferent. You see, now and then, a man who seems to have set out with the principle not to "do as others do," but whose only purpose is to show his independence. There are many better ways of showing independence, and there is certainly no sense in that. Wear coats and hats like other people, if you can afford to do so, unless you have really some principle better than that of mere singularity, which requires that the brim of your hat be an inch narrower or an inch broader than those which your neighbours wear, and that your coat be without collar, and cut away at the tails, or in the fashion of the last century, or in no fashion at all. Comply with all the usages of the society in which you mingle, unless there happen to be something about them so senseless or wrong, that you would deem yourself foolish or wicked to do so; or there be some important reform which you would like to see effected, and which there is a reasonable chance of bringing about. A man never gets any respect, or influence either, for being crotchety, and people soon find out that he is so. He who goes into a crowd with his arms a-kimbo, thrusting his elbows into everybody's sides that comes in his way, will certainly be noticed, though we can't say much for his being respected. Now, that is a liberal admission of the principle, "Do at Rome as Rome does." Beyond this there is danger and wrong. It has been the ruin of multitudes. A young lad, for instance, sticks a cigar in the corner of his mouth, and makes most persevering endeavours to smoke it, not because he likes it, for it makes him sick, but because others do it; a working man goes to the public-house because his fellow-workmen do it; people set up their houses in a style far beyond them, because their neighbours do so; people, in short, do all kinds of foolish and wicked things, because others do them. We have seen a drover, aided by a whole posse of dogs and butchers' boys, labouring for a long time, without success, to drive a flock of sheep into a narrow passage which led to a slaughter-house. They might have had a presentiment of what awaited them within; for they made all kinds of efforts to get up the street and down the street, and seemed as though they would go anywhere rather than through that passage. At length, somehow or other, one of the flock was induced to enter, and then, without a moment's hesitation, all the rest followed. It is one of Satan's most crafty devices to lead men to destruction, in the wake of others about whom he is sure. Be certain that the thing is right, ere

you follow anybody. If but suspicious that they are wrong, have the courage to stand aloof. Better go the right way alone, than "follow a multitude to do evil." If you must follow somebody, follow in the track of the wise and the good, remembering that whilst it is said, "A companion of fools shall be destroyed," it is also said, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise;" remembering, too, that if you walk now with the wise, you will inherit with them all "the promises."

Pope has two lines, which have now become proverbial:—

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

It is very likely that a man who has a smattering of knowledge may be conceited, and set up his judgment against that of everybody else, and pronounce older and better-educated people to be quite mistaken, and speak most oracularly on those very subjects about which really thoughtful men feel that they know nothing. The most mischievous demagogues and agitators have been men of this very class. Still, it does not need even "a little knowledge" to be conceited. The most ignorant men have very often quite as much conceit as those who know "a little." Let every one, whether he have little knowledge or much, guard against that; but don't let that, or any other fancied danger, be set up against the diffusion of knowledge, or as an excuse for ignorance. Though a man can't get to logarithms, there is no "danger" in his learning the Rule of Three; if he can't read the "Principia," he may find it worth while to master the first half dozen books of Euclid; if a man can't become a first-rate scientific chemist, there is no reason why he should not know something about the "chemistry of common life;" if he can't go to the original sources of history, and verify its facts by poring over dusty records and worm-eaten volumes, he need not deny himself the pleasure and advantage of reading Prescott or Macaulay. The fact is, it is only a little knowledge that the vast majority can secure. Let us "drink deeply," if we can; but if we cannot do that, at all events let us "taste" the spring.

"Marriage is a lottery." A good many years ago some flaming bills were posted on the walls of the town in which we then lived, headed, "Bish's Lottery; all Prizes, and no Blanks." There is a strong analogy between the promise of that bill and the promises of hope in regard to matrimony—"all prizes, and no blanks." The young man who dreams of matrimony—and we suppose most young men do so sometimes—never dreams of a *blank*. He will surely not get a slattern, or a scold, or a dirty, useless drab. He hopes to get a prize, and such a prize as nobody else ever won—the light of his house, the sharer of his joys, the solace of his cares. And the young maiden, too, expects that her husband will be such a treasure—a prize which every one of her sisters will envy her all the days of her life. "It's all very fine," growls some poor disappointed fellow, who has not got much of a prize, "it's all very fine; you may do very well, or you may do very ill; it's all a lottery." Young people, don't believe him! It is not a lottery—at all events, it need not be. It is not a game of chance, but a thing for the exercise of prudence, common sense, forethought, and prayerfulness. If

young people would only wait till they have attained to something like maturity of understanding, and till they know what they are likely to be in the world; if they would exercise the same degree of reason about it which they do about other things; if, especially, they would ask for that Divine guidance which is needed more for no step in life, in nineteen cases out of twenty, and perhaps a good many more, they would get "all prizes, and no blanks." There is an old Northumbrian rhyme, which, homely as it is, is well worth the attention of those of our readers who have their prizes yet to draw:—

"A man may spend
And yet may fend,
If his wife be owt, if his wife be owt;
A man may care
And yet be bare,
If his wife be nowt, if his wife be nowt."

Above all things, let those of our readers who may be contemplating an early induction into the holy state of matrimony, seek from on high that "wisdom which is profitable to direct."

BISCUIT:

A VISIT TO A GOVERNMENT MANUFACTORY.

ONE of the most noted of the government stores, whence is supplied biscuit for our soldiers and sailors, is close to Portsmouth. Being in that neighbourhood lately, it seemed worth while to pay it a visit. There was no special difficulty in regard to admission; and I quickly found myself in the midst of a small group waiting at the entrance door on a mission similar to my own. We were speedily inside, and our inspection of the establishment began.

We first enter a well-paved, well-kept, roomy yard, contiguous to which is the Bay of Portsmouth, with its crowd of vessels great and small, its giant men-of-war, and its less bulky but more easily handled spitfires. A quiet, pleasant-speaking official interrupts our brief contemplation of this spectacle, takes us in hand, and marches us off. A door is opened, and we are admitted into a close, almost unbreatheable atmosphere. The asthmatic among our party cough and wheeze till they are red in the face; while the rest breathe short, and laugh at one another. The air is laden with flour, which is floating about everywhere in finest powder. It has powdered the hair and eyelashes of the men and boys employed here, and it is not long ere it begins to give us the appearance of millers' men. This is the room where the biscuit for her Majesty's soldiers and sailors is "turned out." Between thirty and forty men and boys are at work. Some are watching the dough during the kneading process; some are tumbling it on tables to be pressed into great wads; some are handing it out to be still further pressed; others are tending it under the great plate where it is stamped; while yet others are carrying it off to be baked in yon yawning ovens, where the men swelter so much and speak so little.

We turn next to the machinery employed in mixing and cutting up the material. Here the flour and water enter a great trough, and are

kneaded; there the mass is rolled out; there it is cut; there stamped; there baked. Having seen the flour and water introduced at one end, we try a new-made biscuit at the other. But in venturing on this experiment, the taster ought to have teeth not subject to toothache.

Having seen what eyes may see, we begin to ask questions, and are pleased to find that the intelligent official answers readily. The greatest quantity of biscuit, it appears, ever made at one time in this establishment, amounted to fifteen tons in twenty-four hours. This was sufficient bread for 32,000 men for a day. There are eight ovens blazing away. An extra one is ready for express occasions. Thirty-four men are usually at work. They come into the room as boys at six shillings a week, and rise gradually through six, eleven, eighteen shillings wages, till they take charge of an oven at twenty-seven shillings a week. As we put down the last item, our informant quietly remarked, "We don't allow any writing here, sir." We instantly put away our notes, having already obtained and recorded the information we particularly wanted.

"Afraid of the 'Times' correspondent?" one suggests.

"Well," he says, with a good-humoured laugh, "you see, sir, there are so many come now-a-days with stumps of pencil ready to put down anything."

"Humph! No great danger in that."

"No; but really people do make such mistakes!"

"Ah!"

"Yes; and sometimes, when our visitors are numerous, and all asking questions and making notes, it would almost confuse Lord Palmerston to answer them. Not long ago a pretty large boarding-school came, with their masters. They had all pencils and note-books, sir."

Responding to his laugh, we leave our communicative official here, and follow in the train of another functionary, who has for some time been stamping on the stones outside, and looking furtively in, by way of a reminder. They do not like very tedious visits here.

We now enter the lower part of the Grinding House. Dust, dust, dust; white, and fine, and penetrating, making one sneeze and sneeze again. Here the flour, being ground, delivers itself into little cans, which instantly hoist it up to another loft to be cleaned. All this is done by machinery. Birr, birr, birr! and the work goes cheerily on. Up another flight of stairs, and we are in the room where it is ground. Ten pairs of stones are at work, crunching, and crushing, and whirling incessantly in a tempest of dusty wind. We pass through the dressing-room—that is, where the flour is dressed—and by dint of many questions learn somewhat more of the facts and figures of the establishment. Fifteen sacks an hour are ground here. Each sack contains two hundred and a half, or 2cwt. 70lbs. The flour remains two days in the sack to allow it to cool from the heated condition in which it issues after the grinding process. The wheat supplied must be all 60lbs. to the bushel, on penalty of a fine of two shillings on each deficiency. The machinery? Well; I am not an engineer, and cannot say much about

that, except that it includes "all the latest improvements." We did put our faces in to look at a dressing or separating screw at work, and found a difficulty in breathing for some minutes afterwards.

Let us pass on to the granary. Here the obliging official takes a brush and makes us look less like millers' men. Great heaps of corn, apparently ranged by line and rule, so neat are they, lie ready to be hoisted away, which they will be very quickly indeed. But what are those machines in the corner?

"For roasting coffee, sir,"

"Were they put up after the hubbub and outcry, then?" asks one most indiscreet gentleman.

The official answers with pleasant sagacity, "Was there an outcry, then?"

Then we wander away through piled-up store-rooms, where biscuit-bags, and barrels of beef, and pork, and lemon juice extend in mighty rows. At length we emerge again into open air. "And what are these?" is our instant question—"these sarcastic-looking individuals in strange striped tunic and trousers, under command of that military-looking gentleman?"

"Convicts," answers the attendant.

"Ah! Arn't you afraid of their escaping, or doing some damage? They look particularly free and easy."

"Well, they do attempt it sometimes; but it's of no use. Some time ago we had such an affair, and a droll business it was. One of the convicts managed to get off. He crept into the house yonder, where the keeper of the yard lives, and got upstairs into master's bedroom. There he proceeded to don a suit of the best he could get, arraying himself all complete, with a specially natty necktie. He found the master's boots rather small—a very tight fit. Whilst he tugged and pulled at the bluchers, the opportunity was gone. He was caught. The boots settled him."

We take another look at the noble bay, and begin to think on the destination of the brave men for whom yon machinery is whirling to turn out with all speed one important ingredient in their provision. We begin to ponder both the present and the eternal—their claims on our sympathy, our goodwill, and effort. But our official had done his piloting, another group is waiting, and we are speedily outside the gate.

MY FRIEND'S "MAG."

THE moral character of magpies does not stand very high in public estimation. They are known to be thieves and plunderers, and it would seem that they steal for the mere pleasure of stealing, inasmuch as they are convicted, on irrefragable testimony, of flying furtively off with articles which are of no manner of use to them. Such things as are easily portable and within their reach, they will hoard in secret out-of-the-way places, augmenting the store with apparently a real miser's pleasure, as occasion offers. Exploits like these, however, seem to be peculiar to such of the race as are tamed and familiar with man, for whose haunts and domestic doings Maggie testifies a marked predilection; and when he is once fairly

domiciled, he soon begins to show that he feels himself at home. Whether civilization and human intercourse demoralizes the race of magpies we cannot affirm, but it is probable that this vice of the tame bird is but the perverted phase of that natural instinct which leads him in his wild state to make a provision for his future wants. If so, it must be that, while retaining his habits of accumulation and secretion, he loses the discrimination which alone would render them serviceable.

In his wild state, Mag is most unscrupulous in his modes of helping himself. We cannot call him an unsocial bird; on the contrary, he likes company of all sorts, but he likes it for what he can get by it, and contrives to get—or he is much belied—far more than his share of social privileges. He will build his nest, if possible, within the vicinity of man's dwelling; but then he will have it also at no great distance from the nests of smaller birds. He is never far away from the farm-house, and is not at all shy of the suburbs of towns and cities. He will consort with crows and jackdaws in the furrowed field—will follow the ploughman as he turns up the glebe—he will rout in the farmyard with the domestic fowls, and will make himself at home with the flocks and herds in their pastures. If he gets enough to satisfy his appetite in these rounds, all well and good; but if he does not, Maggie turns a regular Sepoy: he will attack the unfledged broods of the robin, the lark, the blackbird, or the sparrow, and, devouring them in part, will leave their mangled bodies a spectacle of horror to the bereaved parents. A gentleman who had witnessed this atrocity on the part of Mag, was attracted shortly after by the strange conduct of a pair of little wrens, the smallest of English birds. Mag had assassinated and eviscerated a half-fledged brood of hedge-sparrows. The parent birds had flown away from the scene of slaughter, and had not returned. The wrens, about the third day after, commenced covering the mangled victims with leaves. They occupied themselves with this task for several hours, plucking with their bills the small leaves of a privet hedge, and depositing them in closely-packed layers upon the mutilated bodies, never pausing in the operation until the dead were buried several inches deep in the green strata.

The magpie, depredator as he is, will not, like some other birds, install himself in the nest of a different species. But, on the other hand, he is apt to take possession by violence of another magpie's nest which he had no share in building, if the thing is to be done. Fearful battles will sometimes take place between the rightful owner of a last year's nest and an intending squatter; and in such a case the conqueror takes possession of the disputed mansion. In these battles the female bird takes no part, but sits quietly until the duel is terminated, and then shares the triumph or defeat of her mate, as the case may be.

The propensities of magpies are well known to the peasantry of most countries in Europe, and in all of them Mag enjoys but an indifferent reputation. Among the ignorant of our own population he is a bird of ill or of good omen, according to circumstances. Thus it is absurdly considered lucky to meet a couple of magpies in your route, but

unlucky to meet one; fortunate, again, to meet four, but unfortunate to meet three; and so on, the odd number being an evil omen and the even number a good one.

Notwithstanding his equivocal character, however, the magpie is everywhere a favourite pet, and that for many reasons. In the first place he is, when in good condition, so extremely handsome in person, that it is a real pleasure to look at him; in the next place, he is so delightfully pert, nonchalant, and impudent; and, in the third place, he will talk, when the whim takes him, with such a torrent of words, and will learn to talk so readily, and often without the trouble of teaching, that one gets more conversation out of him, in proportion to the pains taken, than out of any other bird.

Such a bird is "my friend's Mag." He was born in captivity, but having been brought up and educated upon a liberal system, has never until lately been subjected to the hardship of close imprisonment. So long as he occupied provincial quarters, there was no inconvenience in leaving the door of his cage open, and, in fact, it was rarely shut, save at night. Mag went in and out as he chose, hopped about the sitting-room, and made his collections of small articles, which he stored on an upper shelf; or flew out of the window, and enjoyed the range of the garden or the stable-yard. By the time he was eighteen months old, he had picked up the vernacular with tolerable proficiency, and took a marked pleasure in repeating at home such phrases as he had heard abroad. But his acquirements were not confined to articulate language: he not only called angrily for Tom and Dick, and rated them with naughty words, but he crowed like the cock, clucked like the hen that has just laid an egg, bleated like the sheep, barked like a dog, and whistled like "the curly-headed plough-boy" himself. These indications of talent led to encouragement, and a good deal of petting, and some attempts further to develop his faculties. Mag soon found himself capable of greater things. Introduced to the parlour, he began to babble terms of politeness, oddly mingled, however, with the coarseness of his former experiences. With the gravest face he would ask a visitor to take a glass of wine, exhort him to "keep his pecker up," and threaten him with a broken head—all in the same breath. He caught and remembered all the conventional small talk with which casual visitors were received and dismissed, and uttered the same phrases in the voices of the several speakers.

Occasionally he would absent himself from the house for a day or two, taking up his quarters at night in barn or hayloft, but never wandering to any great distance or discontinuing his familiarity with his friends at home. One strange peculiarity, however, had Maggie—he would leave the house by any mode of exit which presented itself, either open door or window; but when foul weather or hunger drove him home, or he took it into his head to return without any such cause, he invariably made his re-entrance down the kitchen chimney. It was in vain that the doors were thrown wide or the windows opened—Mag scorned such ordinary portals; but, mounting to the top of the chimney, he would sit for a few moments peering with a look of extreme sagacity down the smoking

orifice, and then, dropping suddenly like a bullet, would disappear from sight, and would be found a few minutes after in his cage, pecking at his plumage, clawing himself over, and making his toilet with a care that showed how proud he really was of his black and white costume and the magnificent expansion of his spotless tail.

So long as he lived in the country, where the kitchen chimney was of width ample enough to accommodate half a score flitches of bacon hung there to be smoked—and where one might sit in the chimney corner and catch a glimpse of a star or two through the rising smoke—so long, I say, it was of no ill consequence to Mag that he should select that means of entering the house. But the case was altered when Mag was brought to London. Without any thought of consequences, the window of the room where stood his cage was one day left open, and out flew Maggie on a voyage of discovery. The window was left open to facilitate his return; but, true to his antecedents, Mag scorned the window as much as ever, and night came on without his re-appearance. There was lamentation in the house over his loss, it being generally considered that they had seen the last of him; but it was not so.

Cook was sitting at the kitchen fire darning her old stockings, about ten o'clock, when a most portentous whirring noise was heard in the chimney; and the next moment down came a black monster with flashing eyes and extended claws, and in an instant plumped on the middle of the table.

"Pretty kettle o' fish! Pretty kettle o' fish!" bawled the bird—for Mag was the monster "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

Cook had vanished up-stairs, screaming with terror, but there were those above who recognised the voice of the bird, and in a few minutes he was safe in his cage again, crowing and clucking amidst a shower of soot, which he shook off at every motion.

Mag did little more than make his toilet for the next fortnight. It cost him no end of labour, and some fifty cold baths, to get himself decently clean, and he wasn't comfortable till that was effectually accomplished.

Since then, Mag has led the life of a prisoner. His confinement, however, has not taken the conceit out of him, or the impudence either. A saucier creature does not exist, and the loss of his liberty has never affected his spirits. It is true he can no longer pilfer and hoard up stray articles; but, what is very singular, he does something almost analogous to that in another way. As formerly he laid by material things—though for what purpose is not clear—so now he hoards up a stock of words and phrases, for the sake of uttering them on a future day. It is a fact that he will, and often does, reproduce the exact words and tones heard some time before, and of which at the period he appeared to take no notice. In this way he has more than once blabbed secrets which were thought to be in safe keeping, and has thus been the cause of some comical perplexities in the region of the kitchen.

And small blame to Mag for that! If a serviceable hint may avail to mitigate the rancour of a gossiping tongue, it is none the worse, that I know of, for proceeding from a magpie.

Poetry.

LIVE.

MAKE haste, O man, to live,
For thou so soon must die;
Time hurries past thee like a breeze,
How swift its moments fly.
Make haste, O man, to live!

To breathe, and wake, and sleep;
To smile, to sigh, to grieve;
To move in idleness through earth,
This, this is not to live!
Make haste, O man, to live!

Make haste, O man, to do
Whatever must be done;
Thou hast no time to lose in sloth,
Thy day will soon be gone.
Make haste, O man, to live!

Up, then, with speed, and work;
Fling ease and self away;
This is no time for thee to sleep,
Up, watch, and work, and pray!
Make haste, O man, to live!

The useful, not the great;
The silent that never dies;
The silent toil that is not lost,
Set these before thine eyes.
Make haste, O man, to live.

Make haste, O man, to live,
Thy time is almost o'er;
O sleep not, dream not, but arise,
The Judge is at the door.
Make haste, O man, to live!

H. BONAR.

THE FIRESIDE.—The fireside is a seminary of infinite importance. It is important because it is universal, and because the education it bestows, being woven in with the woof of childhood, gives form and colour to the whole texture of life. There are few who can receive the honours of a college, but all are graduates of the hearth. The learning of the university may fade from the recollection, its classic lore may moulder in the halls of memory; but the simple lessons of home, enamelled upon the heart of childhood, defy the rust of years, and outlive the more mature but less vivid picture of after life. So deep, so lasting, indeed, are the impressions of early life, that you often see a man in the imbecility of age holding fresh in his recollection the events of childhood, while all the wide space between that and the present hour is a blasted and forgotten waste. You have perchance seen an old and half-obliterated portrait, and in the attempt to have it cleaned and restored you may have seen it fade away, while a brighter and more perfect picture, painted beneath, is revealed to view. This portrait, first drawn upon the canvas, is no inapt illustration of youth; and though it may be concealed by some after design, still the original traits will shine through the outward picture, giving it tone while fresh, and surviving it in decay. Such is the fireside—the great institution of Providence for the education of man.—*Goodrich.*

BISHOP HORNE once said that to reject the evidence of prophecy till all divines shall agree exactly about it, argues a conduct as wise in the infidels as if they should decline sitting down to a good dinner till all the clocks in London and Westminster struck four together.

ADIEU.—This is an expression of farewell, familiarly used by all classes of people: but its derivation, which is a beautiful one, is not perhaps as generally known. It comes from the French words *a Dieu*—to God—implying, I depart from you, but leave you to the protection of Heaven.